



**Commission on
Human Rights**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Alicia McCauley, amccauley@cchr.nyc.gov, (212) 416-0105

**NYC COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS ANNOUNCES INVESTIGATION INTO
PRADA FOLLOWING REPORTS OF RACIST MERCHANDISING AND DISPLAY**

New York – The NYC Commission on Human Rights today launched an official investigation on behalf of the City into Prada, following reports of commercial sales and displays featuring racist iconography as well as an employee facing retaliation for lodging a complaint regarding the display. The Commission has issued a Cease and Desist letter to Prada USA Corp. demanding the company immediately stop displaying and selling the “Pradamalia” goods, retaliating against any employees for opposing the offensive and illegal material, and commit to providing NYC Human Rights Law training for all Prada employees, executives, and independent contractors.

“In a time when reports of anti-Black discrimination and racism are increasing, it is appalling to see this kind of blatantly racist displays and merchandise from Prada,” said Assistant Commissioner of the NYC Commission on Human Rights Sapna V. Raj. “Black New Yorkers face discrimination and bias every day. To see racist Jim Crow-era imagery so patently on display at an international luxury retailer’s storefront is appalling and not tolerated in our city. The Commission is taking swift action to demand Prada immediately comply with the NYC Human Rights Law, examine internal practices, issue an apology to all New Yorkers, and refrain from engaging in this type of harmful and discriminatory conduct in the future.”

The retailer’s display and merchandise were brought to the attention of the Commission by Chinyere Ezie, attorney for the Center for Constitutional Rights.

“I was shocked to see Blackface and Sambo images in a Prada Soho window display in 2018,” said Center for Constitutional Rights Attorney Chinyere Ezie. “This iconography has been used throughout history to mock and demean Black people and strip us of our humanity—oftentimes in response to our efforts to assert our rights. It was a cruel reminder of how history continues to repeat itself. The New York City Commission on Human Rights reached out to me and has joined the Center for Constitutional Rights in not only calling Prada out but taking action. Everyday racism is just a bitter pill that Black people have to swallow, but as New Yorkers we can fight back.”

New York City is home to one of the strongest anti-discrimination and anti-harassment laws in the nation, the NYC Human Rights Law, which prohibits discrimination and harassment in housing, employment, and public accommodations. Under the NYC Human Rights Law, it is illegal to deny equal access to public accommodations such as stores, hospitals, and restaurants.

The Commission has the authority to fine violators with civil penalties of up to \$250,000 for willful and malicious violations of the Law and can award compensatory damages to victims, including emotional distress damages and other benefits. The Commission can also order trainings on the NYC Human Rights Law, changes to policies, and restorative justice relief such as community service and mediated apologies.

New York City remains at the forefront of the fight to combat racial discrimination and harassment and is currently engaged in a comprehensive agenda to address anti-Black racism and discrimination that include a research project, event programming and community and media outreach.

If you believe you are the victim of discriminatory or unequal access to a public accommodation or any other type of discrimination under the NYC Human Rights Law, call the Commission's Infoline at [718-722-3131](tel:718-722-3131). Reports may also be filed anonymously and reported on the [Commission's website](#).

For more information on the Law and Public accommodations please visit the [Commission's Fact Page](#) .

###